

**1999 SENATE JUDICIARY**

**SB 2121**

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB2121

Senate Judiciary Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 12, 1999

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		1276 - 3078
2-15-99 1	x		3210 - 5600
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Jackie Follman</i>			

Minutes:

SB2121 relates to requirements for conducting a Presidential Preference Contest.

SENATOR STENEHJEM opened the hearing on SB2121 at 9:30 A.M.

All were present.

CORY FONG, Secretary of State Office, Elections Director, testified in support of SB2121.

Testimony attached.

SENATOR NELSON asked why must this contest proceed. It was supposed to be a one time thing to see if it worked or not.

CORY FONG stated that this was our understanding as well. However, in the late 1997 session we learned that in fact this contest was provided for by law. What did expire was the provision that gave the Secretary of State flexibility to conduct the Presidential Preference Contest with some leeway to come in with the allotted funding. In 1995, the allocation for this Contest was

\$275,000 and we ended up conducting it for about \$200,000 and therefore I think that it is why there has been the reduction. Our understanding was that it was a one time shot. The law currently provides for it and we at least want to be given the ability to conduct it a decent manner.

SENATOR NELSON asked what kind of Amendment do we have put on this Bill to do away with it.

CORY FONG stated that he would visit with the Secretary of State about this.

SENATOR STENEHJEM asked if the wording in this bill is the same as the previous bill.

CORY FONG stated that is correct.

SENATOR TRAYNOR asked if the Secretary of State had rulemaking power.

CORY FONG stated that he believed so.

SENATOR STENEHJEM asked without this bill, the Secretary of State cannot shorten poll hours.

CORY FONG stated that is correct.

SENATOR WATNE asked when the other states Presidential primary dates are.

CORY FONG stated that he could get us a calendar of other state primaries.

SENATOR TRAYNOR asked how many people voted in the 1996 contest.

CORY FONG stated there were 72,530 voters - 15% turnout.

KEVIN GLATT, Burleigh County Auditor, testified in opposition to SB2121.

If passed, please give the Secretary of State authority to run an efficient election.

SENATOR STENEHJEM stated that we will hold action on this bill until we get more information.

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Senate Judiciary Committee

Bill/Resolution Number SB2121

Hearing Date January 12, 1999

SENATOR STENEHJEM SUSPENDED the hearing on SB2121.

SENATOR STENEHJEM proposed amendments from Legislative Council.

AL JAEGER explained the proposed amendments.

Discussion. If we incorporate these amendments, we won't need SB2322.

SENATOR WATNE made a motion on Amendments, SENATOR TRAYNOR seconded.

Motion carried. 6 - 0 - 0

SENATOR WATNE made a motion for DO PASS AS AMENDED, SENATOR TRAYNOR

seconded. Motion carried. 6 - 0 - 0

SENATOR NELSON will carry the bill.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2121

Page 1, line 1, replace "a" with "two" and replace "section" with "sections"

Page 1, line 2, after "contest" insert "; to amend and reenact section 16.1-11-02 and subdivision v of subsection 2 of section 28-32-01 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the time for holding presidential preference contests and the adoption of rules by the secretary of state; to provide an effective date; and to provide an expiration date"

Page 1, after line 3, insert:

**"SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 16.1-11-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**16.1-11-02. Presidential preference contest - Time for holding.** In a presidential election year after 2003, there must be conducted a presidential preference contest on the last Tuesday in February of that year. The presidential preference contest may be used only to instruct delegates to a national political convention and may not further the electoral process for any other purpose. No other election or vote on a measure of any kind may be held in conjunction with the presidential preference contest."

Page 1, underscore lines 6 through 10

Page 1, after line 10, insert:

**"SECTION 3.** A new section to chapter 16.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**2000 presidential caucus.**

1. On one designated day between the last Tuesday in February and the first Tuesday in March in the year 2000, every political party entitled to a separate column under section 16.1-11-30 may conduct a presidential preference caucus. If employed by a political party, the results of a presidential preference caucus must be used to instruct delegates to a national political convention.
2. A presidential preference caucus must be conducted in the manner provided in chapter 16.1-03 with the exception that a political party is not required to hold individual caucuses in every election precinct throughout a district. Only those persons who either voted or affiliated with the party at the last general election or intend to vote or affiliate with the party at the next general election may participate and vote at the presidential preference caucus.
3. Unless specifically forbidden by national party rules, the delegates selected by political parties at a presidential preference caucus are bound to cast their first ballots at the party national convention in such a manner that each candidate at the party's presidential preference caucus receives a proportion of the total votes cast by the delegates equal to the proportion received by that candidate of the total votes cast for all candidates for president of that party at the caucus. If party rules do not allow apportionment of a delegate and such an apportionment appears

necessary because no candidate received more than five-tenths of a delegate, in computing the number of delegates to which a candidate is entitled on the first ballot that delegate must be assigned to the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in the contest. If a candidate withdraws before the first ballot voting begins, delegates obligated to vote for that candidate on the first ballot are released from that obligation.

4. A presidential preference contest, as provided for in chapter 16.1-11, may not be conducted in the year 2000 nor is a political party entitled to conduct a presidential preference contest in the year 2000. A political party must notify the secretary of state before August 1, 1999, if the political party will conduct a presidential preference caucus in the year 2000 according to this section.

**SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Subdivision v of subsection 2 of section 28-32-01 of the 1997 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

- v. The secretary of state with respect to rules adopted for the presidential preference contest under section ~~16.1-11-02.2~~ 2 of this Act.

**SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.** Section 2 of this Act becomes effective on January 1, 2003.

**SECTION 6. EXPIRATION DATE.** Section 3 of this Act is effective through April 1, 2000, and after that date is ineffective."

Renumber accordingly

Date: 2-15-99  
Roll Call Vote #: 1

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB2121

Senate Judiciary Committee

Subcommittee on \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Motion on Amendments

Motion Made By Watne Seconded By Traynor

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Wayne Stenehjem	X				
Senator Darlene Watne	X				
Senator Stanley Lyson	X				
Senator John Traynor	X				
Senator Dennis Bercier	X				
Senator Caroloyne Nelson	X				

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Floor Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 2-15-99  
Roll Call Vote #: 2

1999 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. SB 2121

Senate Judiciary Committee

Subcommittee on \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Do Pass As Amended

Motion Made By Watne Seconded By Traynor

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Senator Wayne Stenehjem	X				
Senator Darlene Watne	X				
Senator Stanley Lyson	X				
Senator John Traynor	X				
Senator Dennis Bercier	X				
SenatorCarolyn Nelson	X				

Total (Yes) 6 No 0

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Senator Nelson



REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2121: Judiciary Committee (Sen. W. Stenehjem, Chairman) recommends AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS and when so amended, recommends DO PASS (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2121 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 1, replace "a" with "two" and replace "section" with "sections"

Page 1, line 2, after "contest" insert "and a presidential caucus; to amend and reenact section 16.1-11-02 and subdivision v of subsection 2 of section 28-32-01 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the time for holding presidential preference contests and the adoption of rules by the secretary of state; to provide an effective date; and to provide an expiration date"

Page 1, after line 3, insert:

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**16.1-11-02. Presidential preference contest - Time for holding.** In a presidential election year after 2003, there must be conducted a presidential preference contest on the last Tuesday in February of that year. The presidential preference contest may be used only to instruct delegates to a national political convention and may not further the electoral process for any other purpose. No other election or vote on a measure of any kind may be held in conjunction with the presidential preference contest."

Page 1, underscore lines 6 through 10

Page 1, after line 10, insert:

**"SECTION 3.** A new section to chapter 16.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**2000 presidential caucus.**

1. On one designated day between the last Tuesday in February and the first Tuesday in March in the year 2000, every political party entitled to a separate column under section 16.1-11-30 may conduct a presidential preference caucus. If employed by a political party, the results of a presidential preference caucus must be used to instruct delegates to a national political convention.
2. A presidential preference caucus must be conducted in the manner provided in chapter 16.1-03 with the exception that a political party is not required to hold individual caucuses in every election precinct throughout a district. Only those persons who either voted or affiliated with the party at the last general election or intend to vote or affiliate with the party at the next general election may participate and vote at the presidential preference caucus.
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president of that party at the caucus. If party rules do not allow apportionment of a delegate and such an apportionment appears necessary because no candidate received more than five-tenths of a delegate, in computing the number of delegates to which a candidate is entitled on the first ballot that delegate must be assigned to the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in the contest. If a candidate withdraws before the first ballot voting begins, delegates obligated to vote for that candidate on the first ballot are released from that obligation.

4. A presidential preference contest, as provided for in chapter 16.1-11, may not be conducted in the year 2000 nor is a political party entitled to conduct a presidential preference contest in the year 2000. A political party must notify the secretary of state before August 1, 1999, if the political party will conduct a presidential preference caucus in the year 2000 according to this section.

**SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Subdivision v of subsection 2 of section 28-32-01 of the 1997 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

- v. The secretary of state with respect to rules adopted for the presidential preference contest under section ~~16.1-11-02.2~~ 2 of this Act.

**SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.** Sections 2 and 4 of this Act become effective on January 1, 2003.

**SECTION 6. EXPIRATION DATE.** Section 3 of this Act is effective through April 1, 2000, and after that date is ineffective."

Renumber accordingly

**1999 HOUSE JUDICIARY**

**SB 2121**


1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. : 2121

House Judiciary Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date March 8, 1999

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		X	23.3
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

COREY FONG (SOS) Presented written testimony, a copy of which is attached.

COMMITTEE ACTION

REP. MARAGOS moved that the committee recommend that the bill DO PASS. Rep.

Koppelman seconded and the motion passed on a roll call vote with 12 ayes, 3 nays and 0 absent.

Rep. Koppelman was assigned to carry the bill on the floor.

VK  
3/9/99

**HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2121 3/10/99 JUD.**

Page 1, line 1, replace "two" with "a" and replace "sections" with "section"

Page 1, line 2, replace "and a" with a period

Page 1, remove lines 3 through 6

Page 1, remove lines 8 through 15

Page 1, remove the underscore under lines 18 through 22

Page 1, remove lines 23 and 24

**HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2121 3/10/99 JUD.**

Page 2, remove lines 1 through 30

**HOUSE AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2121 3/10/99 JUD.**

Page 3, remove lines 1 through 8

Renumber accordingly

Date: 3/8  
 Roll Call Vote #: 1

1999 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
 BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 3121

House JUDICIARY Committee

Subcommittee on \_\_\_\_\_  
 or  
 Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Do ~~Not~~ Pass ~~on~~

Motion Made By MARAGOS Seconded By Koppelman Hawken

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
REP. DEKREY	✓		REP. KELSH	✗	✓
REP. CLEARY	✓		REP. KLEMIN	✓	
REP. DELMORE	✓		REP. KOPPELMAN	✓	
REP. DISRUD	✓		REP. MAHONEY	✓	
REP. FAIRFIELD		✓	REP. MARAGOS	✓	
REP. GORDER		✓	REP. MEYER	✓	
REP. GUNTER	✓		REP. SVEEN	✓	
REP. HAWKEN	✓				

Total Yes 10 No 3

Absent 0

Floor Assignment Koppelman

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)**  
**March 10, 1999 8:57 a.m.**

**Module No: HR-43-4407**  
**Carrier: Koppelman**  
**Insert LC: . Title: .**

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**SB 2121, as engrossed: Judiciary Committee (Rep. DeKrey, Chairman) recommends DO PASS (12 YEAS, 3 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2121 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.**

1999 TESTIMONY

SB 2121





## SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108  
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

January 12, 1999

**TO:** Senator Stenehjem and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

**FR:** Al Jaeger, Secretary of State

**RE: SB 2121 – Presidential Preference Contest**

During the 1995 Legislative Session, House Bill 1432 (S.L. 1995, ch. 209) was approved and signed by the Governor calling for a presidential preference contest to be held on the last Tuesday of February in the following presidential election year, 1996.

Included in House Bill 1432 were provisions to conduct the presidential preference contest by mail ballot election according to chapter 16.1-11.1 of the North Dakota Century Code. House Bill 1432 also gave the Secretary of State valuable flexibility to adopt rules providing for:

- the reduction of poll workers;
- the reduction of poll hours;
- the reduction of precincts;
- the arrangement of names of candidates appearing on the official ballot;
- the publication of sample ballots; and
- open voting in cities or counties.

At the time of its passage during the 1995 Legislative Assembly, it was the understanding of the Secretary of State's office that the February presidential preference contest, authorized by House Bill 1432, was a one-time event that would expire after the contest was conducted in February of 1996. Once the provisions authorizing the contest had expired, it was our understanding that the time for holding the presidential preference contest was to revert back to coincide with the state's regularly scheduled June Primary Election.

However, late in the 1997 Legislative Session, it was learned that this understanding was incorrect and that those provisions of law providing for a February presidential preference contest had not expired. Rather, the only provisions of the 1995 House Bill 1432 that carried an expiration date were those that provided the Secretary of State with the flexibility to adopt rules to conduct the presidential preference (those identified above) along with the \$275,000 appropriation allocated for covering the cost of the contest.

Currently, section 16.1-11-02 of the North Dakota Century Code still specifies that a presidential preference contest shall be conducted on the last Tuesday in February during each presidential election year. (The next contest is set for February 29, 2000) In addition, the Governor has included \$225,000 in the Secretary of State's 1999-2001 agency appropriation for conducting a presidential preference contest in February of 2000. Therefore, in order to provide the Secretary of State's office and the state's county auditors with the necessary flexibility to

**SB 2121 – Testimony of Secretary of State**  
**January 12, 1999**  
**Page two**

conduct the presidential preference contest within the allotted \$225,000 appropriation, Senate Bill 2121 has been introduced to re-instate those original provisions of the 1995 House Bill 1432 that previously expired in 1997.

In addition, since drafting Senate Bill 2121, we learned that minor house keeping amendments are required concerning the rule making authority of Secretary of State that is provided in the bill. Therefore, we have included proposed amendments for consideration as well.

For these reasons, I encourage your support for Senate Bill 2121.

SECRETARY OF STATE  
ALVIN A. JAEGER

HOME PAGE <http://www.state.nd.us/sec>



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## SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108  
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

January 12, 1999

**TO:** Senator Stenehjem and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

**FR:** Al Jaeger, Secretary of State

**RE: SB 2121 – Presidential Preference Contest – Proposed Amendments**

Page 1, after line 10, insert:

**“SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Subdivision v to subsection 2 of section 28-32-01 of the 1997 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Codes is amended and reenacted as follows:

- v. The secretary of state with respect to rules adopted for the presidential preference contest under section ~~16-1-11-02-2~~ 1 of this Act.”

Renumber accordingly



**SECRETARY OF STATE**

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108  
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

January 18, 1999

**TO:** Senator Stenehjem and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

**FR:** Cory G. Fong, Elections Director

**RE:** Presidential Primary Dates

The following is a preliminary breakdown of the presidential primary dates for the year 2000. Please keep in mind that these dates, along with the included states, are subject to change as final decisions are made by state legislatures in the coming months.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Iowa Caucuses</b>   | <b>????? - Mid-February</b>   |
| <b>New Hampshire</b>   | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in March or 1 week earlier than any other similar primary (February 22, 2000)</b> |
| <b>North Dakota</b>  | <b>Last Tuesday in February (February 29, 2000)</b>   |
| <b>New England (Yankee) Primary</b><br>Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont                                       | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in March (March 7, 2000)</b>  |
| <b>West Coast Primary</b><br>California (Washington and Oregon are considering joining California on this date)                            | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in March (March 7, 2000)</b>  |
| <b>Western (Cowboy) Primary</b><br>Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming                                | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Friday after the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in March (March 10, 2000)</b>                      |
| <b>Southern Primary (Super Tuesday)</b><br>Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas                                     | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in March (March 14, 2000)</b>   |
| <b>Great Lakes Primary</b><br>Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin  | <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday in March (March 21, 2000)</b>   |
| <b>Midwestern Regional Primary</b><br><u>interest from</u> Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in April (April 4, 2000)</b>  |
| <b>South Dakota</b>  | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in June (June 6, 2000)</b>  |

Also included are a variety of news articles about presidential primaries.

# Toward a regional presidential primary

by Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh

In August, I was honored to speak at the Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference in Indianapolis.

The topic of my remarks was the creation of a Midwestern regional presidential primary. I was pleased with the positive response to this idea.

Legislators from our region of the country seem to understand what is at stake.

Only 17 percent of registered voters voted in the 1998 primary elections across the nation but probably less than that will nominate our presidential candidates in 2000. Even worse, Midwestern voters will have less influence than that under our current presidential nomination system. In order to have any kind of impact on that process, Midwestern states must band together and form a regional presidential primary.

The current nomination process is flawed in several ways, including too many early primaries, a focus on the pace of the race rather than the qualifications of the candidates and no real opportunity for small states (with the obvious exceptions of Iowa and New Hampshire) to have a voice. Early primaries force candidates to start raising money earlier and put lesser-known candidates at a major disadvantage. Under the current system, momentum is extremely important. To get momentum, candidates must have money, national name recognition and early wins in big states. That formula excludes small Midwestern states from the process.

Recognizing that Iowa and New Hampshire have a unique role in the presidential nomination process, I would not recommend changing their status as "first in the nation," however, other major modifications must occur if Midwestern states are to be of any significance in the nomination of presidential candidates. I support the Republican Party's plan to reward states for going later in the process by allocating more delegates. Regardless of any other changes, I believe both major parties should embrace this concept. The most popular and strongly supported change is the movement to regional primaries.

Regional primaries will become even more popular with the news that California and New York will be holding their primaries on the same day in 2000. California recently passed legislation calling for its presidential primary to be held on March 7, 2000. In response, a task force of Western states will meet in November to discuss creating a Western Presidential Primary shortly after the California primary election.

Currently, there are at least six regional primaries forming or already in existence: Western States,

Rocky Mountain Region, Super Tuesday, Mid-Atlantic States (Junior Tuesday), Upper East Coast Region and the Rust Belt primary. Midwestern

states are in danger of being shut out of the nomination process unless we band together. Election officials in Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wisconsin

have discussed the possibility of forming a Midwestern Regional Primary. There are many reasons to support this partnership.

Individually, only Wisconsin has enough delegates to attract major candidates. As a region, however, we could offer more than 600 delegates — roughly the equivalent of California. A Midwestern Regional Primary would be large enough to attract top-tier candidates and give them an opportunity to discuss issues relevant to the area.

A Midwestern Regional Primary could be a reality in 2000 if there is cooperation among election officials, governors, state legislatures and both major political parties. Four of the seven states have already scheduled a primary election on April 4, 2000. The other three states will need legislative approval in 1999, if they are to hold a primary in 2000. In addition to a common date, binding delegates to the outcome of the election is imperative. This will take cooperation from the political parties, but I am confident they will understand the importance of making the will of the people count.

Although April may seem like a late date in the process, it may actually increase the importance of the primary in a close race. With the absence of an incumbent president (contingent upon the current impeachment proceedings), and an open field for the Republican nomination, it's possible that a primary in early April could be very important in determining the nominees. If it's determined that April is still too late, we can start working on a more suitable date for 2004. We should not, however, give up on 2000.

Midwestern states deserve the right to have an impact on the presidential nomination process. We have an opportunity to realize additional clout if we can work together. It will take the combined commitment of election officials, legislative bodies, governors and the political parties. I believe the outcome is worth the time and effort. ✪

Ron Thornburgh is the Kansas Secretary of State.

*In order to have any kind of impact on that process, Midwestern states must band together and form a regional presidential primary.*



Secretary of State  
Thornburgh

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Western Governors'  
Association



## Western States Finalize Date for Western Presidential Primary

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 31, 1998

Contact: Chris McKinnon, WGA, (303) 623-9378  
Mary Lou Cooper, CSG, (206) 932-8843

**DENVER**-The Western Presidential Primary Task Force, committed to holding a joint presidential primary in early March, will recommend legislatures adopt Friday, March 10 as the date for a unified presidential primary in the year 2000.

The task force was formed to consider benefits, strategies and dates for a regional primary that would boost the region's influence in nominating presidential candidates. At their inaugural meeting in November, task force members agreed the region would command the attention of candidates if the primary were held between the Bicoastal primary on Tuesday, March 7 that includes California and New York and Super Tuesday on March 14.

The task force initially selected Saturday, March 11, however, it decided this week to recommend the primary be moved to Friday to address concerns raised by religious communities who celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday and by county clerks who believe additional expenses might be incurred for employees working overtime. Task force members say a Friday primary would still provide a window for candidates to visit Western states between the Bicoastal and Super Tuesday primaries.

Task force members include legislators, governors or their representatives, party leaders and election officials from Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt and Montana Secretary of State Mike Cooney serve as co-chairs for the task force, which was organized under the auspices of the Western Governors' Association and the Council of State Governments-*WEST*, groups which serve Western governors and state legislators, respectively.

To become a regional player in the year 2000 presidential primaries, participating states must amend individual election laws in 1999. Together, the eight interior Western states elect 10 percent and six percent of the delegates to the Republican and Democratic nominating conventions, respectively.

#####



Western Governors'  
Association



**Western Presidential Primary Task Force**  
**November 17, 1998**(\*amended December 31, 1998)  
*Joint Resolution*

Whereas, the West is becoming the most vibrant and dynamic region of the country and is leading the nation in economic expansion with the top four job-producing states in the country, 10 of the 15 fastest-growing counties, the top five states for population growth and six of the top 10 states for highest personal income gains, and

Whereas, many states in the West traditionally hold their presidential caucuses and primaries late in the primary season, and

Whereas, many of these same states have relatively small numbers of party convention delegates at stake, and

Whereas, as a result of our late primaries and caucuses the parties' nominations for candidate for president are already decided before our contests are held, and

Whereas, because nominations are already decided by the time many of our states hold our primaries and caucuses, fewer citizens participate because they feel like their vote doesn't matter, and

Whereas, as a result of our late primaries and caucuses and our relatively small number of delegates, western issues are rarely discussed by candidates and our states receive significantly fewer visits from candidates, and

Whereas, because of the sense that their votes do not matter because the nominations are already decided coupled with a lack of discourse on regional topics of interest to westerners, many voters feel disenfranchised from the political process in presidential primaries, and

Whereas, it is critical to the West's economy and quality of life that presidential candidates understand issues of vital importance to the West, and

Whereas, by joining together to hold their primaries and caucuses on a single date, candidates will have to pay more attention to western voters and western issues,

Whereas, there has been an increased frontloading in the presidential primary process, the Western Presidential Primary Task Force urges the national political parties, working with state and local officials, to examine mechanisms to improve the presidential primary process and increase citizen participation in that process.

THEREFORE, we the undersigned Western Presidential Primary Task Force chairs of our state delegations, on behalf of our entire delegation, hereby recommend to the legislatures and governors of our states that our states establish the common date of the ~~\*Saturday~~ **FRIDAY** following the first Monday in March to hold our caucuses or presidential primaries.

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By MIKE MCCLEARY of the Tribune

Utah Governor **Mike Leavitt**, center, sells his idea for a western state presidential primary to Gov. **Ed Schafer**, left, and Secretary of State **Al Jaeger**.

## State sought for primary

### Utah governor champions western coalition

DON DAVIS  
*Bismarck Tribune*

Utah's governor extended an invitation to North Dakota political and government leaders to take part in a western regional presidential primary, but no one jumped at the chance.

"I think this has some opportunity for North Dakotans," Gov. Ed Schafer said of the invitation, but there was no commitment to Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt's suggestion.

Leavitt met in Bismarck Tuesday with Schafer, political party leaders, election officials and legislative leaders. He said delegations from at least eight western states will meet in Salt Lake City next month to consider holding presidential primaries and caucuses on the same day to give the region more influence in picking presidential nominees.

"I would hope we can make the

West a viable building block," Leavitt said.

As it is, the Utah governor added, presidential candidates skip most western states to concentrate on big-vote states like New York, Texas and California. With more regional primaries planned for the year 2000 than ever before, Leavitt said, the western states need to work together or candidates have no reason to campaign there.

The leading suggestion is to hold western primaries and caucuses on a Thursday or Saturday in early March, before there have been enough primaries to decide the two major parties' nominees, Leavitt said.

Schafer said state leaders will discuss the idea, but he expressed concerns.

"We're afraid of being lost in the shuffle again," he said, comparing North Dakota to larger states such as Colorado that may take part in a western primary.

Secretary of State Al Jaeger, the state's top election official, expressed concern about having too many primaries too early and about the cost of holding a presidential-only primary.

The state held a presidential primary in February of 1996, using mail-in ballots to save money. Under existing state law, a North Dakota presidential primary is scheduled for Feb. 29, 2000, but there is no money to fund it, Jaeger said.

State Democratic Executive Director Jerry Kelsh said his party would not be bound by a presidential primary, and its only benefit would be to give state party convention delegates an idea of which candidates the electorate preferred.

"I don't know how interested the Democrats were in the bill that ... set up the 1996 selection," Kelsh said, and there does not appear to be interest in another presidential primary.

Leavitt said candidates would find the West to be a cheaper place to campaign than large states. He also said candidates campaigning in the West would learn western issues and be more likely to understand them when elected president.

"They come to North Dakota, they learn about North Dakota issues," Leavitt said.

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issues," Leavitt said.



ALVIN A. JAEGER  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
600 E BOULEVARD AVE DEPT 108  
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

E-MAIL [sos@state.nd.us](mailto:sos@state.nd.us)  
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## SECRETARY OF STATE

February 10, 1999

**TO:** Senator Stenehjem and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

**FR:** Cory Fong, Elections Director

**RE:** SB 2121 – Presidential Preference Contest – Proposed Amendments

Page 1, after line 10, insert:

**“SECTION 2.** A new section to chapter 16.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**2000 Presidential Caucus.** On one designated day between the last Tuesday in February and the first Tuesday in March in the year 2000, every political party entitled to a separate column under section 16.1-11-30 is entitled to conduct a presidential preference caucus.

A presidential preference caucus must be conducted in the manner provided for in chapter 16.1-03 with the exception that a political party is not required to hold individual caucuses in every organized election precinct throughout a district. Only those persons who either voted or affiliated with the party at the last general election or intend to vote or affiliate with the party at the next general election may participate and vote at the presidential preference caucus.

Unless specifically forbidden by national party rules, the delegates selected by political parties are bound to cast their first ballots at the party national convention in such a manner that each candidate at the party's presidential preference caucus receives a proportion of the total votes cast by the delegates equal to the proportion received by that candidate of the total votes cast for all candidates for president of that party at the caucus. In computing the number of delegates a candidate may be entitled to on the first ballot, if party rules do not allow apportionment of a delegate and such an apportionment appears necessary because no candidate received more than five-tenths of a delegate, then that delegate must be assigned to the candidate receiving the highest number of votes in the caucus. If a candidate withdraws before the first ballot voting begins, delegates obligated to vote for that candidate on the first ballot are released from that obligation.

A presidential preference contest, as provided for in chapter 16.1-11, may not be conducted in the year 2000. A political party must notify the secretary of state prior to August 1, 1999 if the political party will conduct a presidential preference caucus in the year 2000 according to this section.

**SECTION 3.** A new section to chapter 16.1-11 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**2004 Presidential Preference Primary or Caucus.** The legislative assembly shall reconsider the provisions contained in chapter 16.1-11 relating to a presidential preference primary and a presidential preference caucus during the regular session of the legislature in the year 2003.

**SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Subdivision v to subsection 2 of section 28-32-01 of the 1997 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Codes is amended and reenacted as follows:

- v. The secretary of state with respect to rules adopted for the presidential preference contest under section ~~16.1-11-02.2~~ 1 of this Act.”

Renumber accordingly

**FEBRUARY 27, 1996 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**  
 Turn Out Of Voters Voting By Mail Vs. Other

COUNTY	MAIL BALLOTS CAST BY MAIL	%	MAIL BALLOTS CAST IN PERSON	%	BALLOTS CAST AT OPEN POLL	%	TOTAL
ADAMS	470	60%	116	15%	192	25%	778
BARNES	993	86%	-	0%	163	14%	1,156
BENSON	638	92%	27	4%	28	4%	693
BILLINGS	177	74%	33	14%	29	12%	239
BOTTINEAU	965	85%	4	0%	164	14%	1,133
BOWMAN	280	59%	77	16%	115	24%	472
BURKE	374	84%	42	9%	27	6%	443
BURLEIGH	7,177	83%	597	7%	864	10%	8,638
CASS	10,216	92%	10	0%	850	8%	11,076
CAVALIER	682	88%	4	1%	85	11%	771
DICKEY	553	79%	86	12%	65	9%	704
DIVIDE	430	78%	58	11%	62	11%	550
DUNN	571	97%	9	2%	9	2%	589
EDDY	265	65%	69	17%	71	18%	405
EMMONS	449	67%	149	22%	76	11%	674
FOSTER	470	78%	91	15%	38	6%	599
G FORKS	4,608	91%	8	0%	433	9%	5,049
G VALLEY	205	53%	96	25%	84	22%	385
GRANT	483	81%	88	15%	28	5%	599
GRIGGS	337	73%	66	14%	56	12%	459
HETTINGER	396	72%	52	9%	102	19%	550
KIDDER	351	59%	169	28%	78	13%	598
LAMOURE	618	88%	16	2%	68	10%	702
LOGAN	223	53%	138	33%	56	13%	417
MCHENRY	813	88%	58	6%	52	6%	923
MCINTOSH	488	73%	128	19%	54	8%	670
MCKENZIE	701	76%	102	11%	118	13%	921
MCLEAN	1,388	91%	72	5%	62	4%	1,522
MERCER	1,434	98%	1	0%	35	2%	1,470
MORTON	2,638	90%	-	0%	300	10%	2,938
MOUNTRAIL	641	79%	81	10%	94	12%	816
NELSON	480	88%	41	8%	25	5%	546
OLIVER	240	65%	60	16%	70	19%	370
PEMBINA	1,000	87%	38	3%	117	10%	1,155

**FEBRUARY 27, 1996 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**  
Turn Out Of Voters Voting By Mail Vs. Other

COUNTY	MAIL BALLOTS CAST BY MAIL	%	MAIL BALLOTS CAST IN PERSON	%	BALLOTS CAST AT OPEN POLL	%	TOTAL
PIERCE	553	74%	79	11%	112	15%	744
RAMSEY	856	77%	56	5%	196	18%	1,108
RANSOM	499	81%	6	1%	108	18%	613
RENVILLE	478	75%	99	16%	61	10%	638
RICHLAND	1,391	87%	82	5%	132	8%	1,605
ROLETTE	606	94%	-	0%	39	6%	645
SARGENT	532	81%	55	8%	71	11%	658
SHERIDAN	303	69%	73	17%	62	14%	438
SIOUX	135	91%	1	1%	12	8%	148
SLOPE	170	89%	12	6%	10	5%	192
STARK	2,240	81%	203	7%	318	12%	2,761
STEELE	297	80%	40	11%	35	9%	372
STUTSMAN	2,245	91%	6	0%	206	8%	2,457
TOWNER	339	78%	55	13%	40	9%	434
TRAILL	787	93%	20	2%	41	5%	848
WALSH	1,397	90%	-	0%	157	10%	1,554
WARD	4,133	77%	373	7%	853	16%	5,359
WELLS	908	88%	75	7%	49	5%	1,032
WILLIAMS	2,191	80%	274	10%	257	9%	2,722
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61,814</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>4,095</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7,429</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>73,338</b>



# Election Statistics & Voter Turnout

## Summary of North Dakota Election Statistics 1980-Present

G = General Election... P = Primary Election... PP = Presidential Primary Election ...S = Special Election

Year	Type	Precincts	Votes Cast	* Population	Eligible Voters	Absentee Voters	Percent Turnout	Election Expense	Wage Expense	Other Expense	Cost Per Vote
1980	P	0	139,594	652,717	462,760	NA	30	596,547	255,101	341,446	4.27
1980	G	0	314,525	652,717	462,760	NA	68	752,387	275,534	476,853	2.39
1982	P	1229	103,875	670,000	461,700	NA	22	612,419	241,554	370,865	5.90
1982	G	1232	272,876	675,000	461,700	NA	64	598,335	260,674	337,661	2.19
1984	P	1191	99,230	675,000	470,500	2,684	21	612,329	239,890	372,439	6.17
1984	G	1193	324,179	675,000	470,500	19,840	69	667,936	266,897	401,039	2.06
1986	P	1166	133,465	684,900	464,100	3,353	29	642,904	250,139	392,765	4.82
1986	G	1158	295,277	684,900	464,100	6,371	64	631,640	276,102	355,538	2.14
1987	S	1121	123,539	684,900	484,100	1,440	26	359,159	197,983	161,176	2.91
1988	P	1096	111,263	667,093	483,000	2,934	23	645,948	246,658	399,290	5.81
1988	G	1090	309,100	667,093	483,000	23,508	64	676,336	276,813	399,523	2.19

1989	S	1034	257,171	667,093	483,000	10,975	53	517,696	255,644	262,052	2.01
1990	P	975	133,911	638,800	463,415	NA	29	640,128	251,678	12,100	4.78
1990	G	991	240,301	638,800	463,415	NA	52	678,340	272,940	8,102	2.82
1992	P	804	146,867	636,800	463,415	6,810	32	717,090	261,276	28,678	4.88
1992	G	782	315,199	636,800	463,415	24,369	68	752,128	280,415	59,511	2.39
1992	S	782	164,165	636,800	461,500	12,986	35	393,988	233,847	9,368	2.40
1994	P	740	139,961	635,000	463,000	6,771	30	675,862	262,260	40,577	4.83
1994	G	739	241,255	635,000	463,000	14,857	52	633,877	273,525	38,605	2.63
1996	PP	53	72,530	641,000	473,000	NA	15	202,716	45,215	**71,671	2.79
1996	P	705	123,131	641,000	473,000	5,926	26	951,580	268,632	***501,428	7.73
1996	G	717	271,861	641,000	473,000	17,970	57	685,452	310,540	15,156	2.52
1998	P	700	99,057	641,000	474,896	4,315	21	696,188	302,453	32,270	7.02
1998	G	702	217,504	640,883	475,860	NA	46	NA	NA	NA	NA

\* Population estimates calculated by the North Dakota Census Data Center  
 \*\* Postage Costs..... \*\*\* Ballot Printing and Legal Notices

➡ To Elections Division

**FEBRUARY 27, 1996 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**  
 Cost Comparison With Past Primaries - April 19, 1996

COUNTY	1992 PRIM VOTES	TOT EXPENSES	COST/VOTE	1994 PRIM VOTES	TOT EXPENSE	COST/VOTE	1996 PRES PRIM VOTES	TOT EXPENSES	COST/VOTE
ADAMS	1,213.00	5,603.00	\$ 4.62	1,102.00	7,330.00	\$ 6.65	778	1,641.40	\$ 2.11
BARNES	3,228.00	22,695.00	\$ 7.03	2,341.00	17,326.00	\$ 7.40	1,156	7,235.04	\$ 6.26
BENSON	1,458.00	11,687.00	\$ 8.02	1,273.00	12,310.00	\$ 9.67	693	2,133.82	\$ 3.08
BILLINGS	460.00	5,540.00	\$ 12.04	558.00	4,884.00	\$ 8.75	236	1,774.01	\$ 7.52
BOTTINEAU	2,121.00	9,895.00	\$ 4.67	1,365.00	9,929.00	\$ 7.27	1,133	2,643.00	\$ 2.33
BOWMAN	1,477.00	8,481.00	\$ 5.74	1,218.00	7,838.00	\$ 6.44	474	1,362.24	\$ 2.87
BURKE	850.00	7,966.00	\$ 9.37	835.00	9,061.00	\$ 10.85	441	1,602.93	\$ 3.63
BURLEIGH	17,911.00	28,858.00	\$ 1.61	19,563.00	28,590.00	\$ 1.46	8,606	17,891.89	\$ 2.08
CASS	19,313.00	59,183.00	\$ 3.06	12,606.00	55,104.00	\$ 4.37	11,066	24,507.38	\$ 2.21
CAVALIER	2,212.00	12,717.00	\$ 5.75	1,996.00	13,666.00	\$ 6.85	771	2,959.98	\$ 3.84
DICKEY	1,508.00	11,559.00	\$ 7.67	1,751.00	11,404.00	\$ 6.51	690	3,335.99	\$ 4.83
DIVIDE	997.00	8,345.00	\$ 8.37	1,014.00	8,588.00	\$ 8.47	480	1,659.40	\$ 3.46
DUNN	1,218.00	11,237.00	\$ 9.23	1,750.00	10,614.00	\$ 6.07	662	3,043.00	\$ 4.60
EDDY	898.00	6,741.00	\$ 7.51	920.00	8,958.00	\$ 9.74	405	1,436.88	\$ 3.55
EMMONS	1,700.00	6,812.00	\$ 4.01	1,585.00	8,107.00	\$ 5.11	671	2,452.94	\$ 3.66
FOSTER	909.00	8,981.00	\$ 9.88	1,266.00	11,601.00	\$ 9.16	599	2,192.29	\$ 3.66
G FORKS	10,793.00	72,516.00	\$ 6.72	7,936.00	41,424.00	\$ 5.22	4,478	12,436.71	\$ 2.78
G VALLEY	654.00	6,379.00	\$ 9.75	710.00	7,416.00	\$ 10.45	385	1,476.14	\$ 3.83
GRANT	1,215.00	10,706.00	\$ 8.81	1,230.00	11,282.00	\$ 9.17	599	1,666.90	\$ 2.78
GRIGGS	1,042.00	8,089.00	\$ 7.76	902.00	6,646.00	\$ 7.37	459	1,943.74	\$ 4.23
HETTINGER	1,250.00	5,582.00	\$ 4.47	878.00	5,900.00	\$ 6.72	550	1,534.29	\$ 2.79
KIDDER	1,037.00	6,874.00	\$ 6.63	1,179.00	7,554.00	\$ 6.41	598	2,584.60	\$ 4.32
LAMOURE	1,420.00	11,307.00	\$ 7.96	1,374.00	12,309.00	\$ 8.96	702	2,230.34	\$ 3.18
LOGAN	1,152.00	6,399.00	\$ 5.55	710.00	9,342.00	\$ 13.16	438	2,765.22	\$ 6.31
MCHENRY	1,806.00	14,821.00	\$ 8.21	1,958.00	15,733.00	\$ 8.04	846	2,408.82	\$ 2.85
MCINTOSH	1,296.00	8,275.00	\$ 6.39	1,591.00	9,019.00	\$ 5.67	670	2,428.86	\$ 3.63
MCKENZIE	1,579.00	13,270.00	\$ 8.40	1,974.00	13,593.00	\$ 6.89	921	2,176.03	\$ 2.36
MCLEAN	3,043.00	10,278.00	\$ 3.38	3,128.00	10,558.00	\$ 3.38	1,524	3,392.85	\$ 2.23
MERCER	2,345.00	15,210.00	\$ 6.49	3,885.00	13,132.00	\$ 3.38	1,470	5,187.44	\$ 3.53
MORTON	5,778.00	19,151.00	\$ 3.31	5,120.00	18,342.00	\$ 3.58	2,939	6,018.13	\$ 2.05
MOUNTRAIL	1,743.00	20,586.00	\$ 11.81	1,884.00	11,026.00	\$ 5.85	814	1,928.91	\$ 2.37
NELSON	1,265.00	7,984.00	\$ 6.31	1,256.00	6,359.00	\$ 5.06	543	2,609.27	\$ 4.81
OLIVER	526.00	5,611.00	\$ 10.67	818.00	5,925.00	\$ 7.24	370	2,235.03	\$ 6.04
PEMBIN/A	1,982.00	19,348.00	\$ 9.76	1,806.00	15,981.00	\$ 8.85	1,155	2,805.28	\$ 2.43

**FEBRUARY 27, 1996 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY**  
**Cost Comparison With Past Primaries - April 19, 1996**

COUNTY	1992 PRIM VOTES	TOT EXPENSES	COST/VOTE	1994 PRIM VOTES	TOT EXPENSE	COST/VOTE	1996 PRES PRIM VOTES	TOT EXPENSES	COST/VOTE
PIERCE	1,027.00	11,292.00	\$ 11.00	1,437.00	11,351.00	\$ 7.90	733	2,798.98	\$ 3.82
RAMSEY	2,546.00	12,888.00	\$ 5.06	2,061.00	11,536.00	\$ 5.60	1,105	3,483.00	\$ 3.15
RANSOM	1,407.00	10,787.00	\$ 7.67	2,558.00	11,464.00	\$ 4.48	613	1,839.80	\$ 3.00
RENVILLE	839.00	8,421.00	\$ 10.04	928.00	7,666.00	\$ 8.26	636	1,482.86	\$ 2.33
RICHLAND	3,712.00	22,423.00	\$ 6.04	3,751.00	24,292.00	\$ 6.48	1,605	7,820.47	\$ 4.87
ROLETTE	1,917.00	10,043.00	\$ 5.24	2,975.00	5,792.00	\$ 1.95	645	3,024.38	\$ 4.69
SARGENT	1,054.00	5,728.00	\$ 5.43	1,477.00	10,691.00	\$ 7.24	657	2,131.61	\$ 3.24
SHERIDAN	875.00	9,742.00	\$ 11.13	776.00	7,746.00	\$ 9.98	467	1,741.51	\$ 3.73
SIOUX	620.00	5,152.00	\$ 8.31	800.00	7,673.00	\$ 9.59	166	1,264.32	\$ 7.62
SLOPE	359.00	5,511.00	\$ 15.35	359.00	6,436.00	\$ 17.93	192	1,020.06	\$ 5.31
STARK	4,796.00	12,869.00	\$ 2.68	4,266.00	14,094.00	\$ 3.30	2,761	4,621.96	\$ 1.67
STEELE	799.00	7,919.00	\$ 9.91	879.00	8,624.00	\$ 9.81	298	1,305.63	\$ 4.38
STUTSMAN	5,845.00	16,317.00	\$ 2.79	6,164.00	15,921.00	\$ 2.58	2,457	7,748.37	\$ 3.15
TOWNER	958.00	9,234.00	\$ 9.64	619.00	7,050.00	\$ 11.39	461	1,636.16	\$ 3.55
TRAILL	1,991.00	13,330.00	\$ 6.70	1,822.00	14,561.00	\$ 7.99	848	2,008.97	\$ 2.37
WALSH	3,078.00	15,215.00	\$ 4.94	2,251.00	15,719.00	\$ 6.98	1,560	3,398.93	\$ 2.18
WARD	11,129.00	24,723.00	\$ 2.22	11,743.00	28,448.00	\$ 2.42	5,241	8,276.95	\$ 1.58
WELLS	1,953.00	13,867.00	\$ 7.10	1,900.00	14,174.00	\$ 7.46	1,033	4,227.31	\$ 4.09
WILLIAMS	4,463.00	13,944.00	\$ 3.12	4,848.00	14,709.00	\$ 3.03	2,730	7,183.84	\$ 2.63
TOTAL	146,767.00	718,091.00	\$ 4.89	141,096.00	684,798.00	\$ 4.85	72,530	202,715.86	\$ 2.79





## SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
600 EAST BOULEVARD AVENUE DEPT 108  
BISMARCK ND 58505-0500

March 8, 1999

**TO:** Representative DeKrey and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

**FR:** Al Jaeger, Secretary of State

**RE: SB 2121 – Presidential Preference Contest and Caucuses**

Senate Bill 2121 originally intended to restore those expired provisions of law which gave the Secretary of State and the state's county auditors the necessary flexibility for conducting the presidential preference contest. That flexibility includes:

- the reduction of poll workers;
- the reduction of poll hours;
- the reduction of precincts;
- the arrangement of names of candidates appearing on the official ballot;
- the publication of sample ballots; and
- open voting in cities or counties.

However, as it made its way through the Senate, a number of things happened to change the course and meaning of Senate Bill 2121. First of all, Senate Bill 2121 keeps in place the current language providing for a presidential preference contest to be conducted during presidential election years and adds the necessary flexibility as provided above. However, the amended bill specifically adds language that skips over the 2000 election year. At the same time, the Senate Appropriations Committee removed the money (\$250,000) set aside in the Secretary of State's budget allocation for conducting a presidential preference contest in 2000. Therefore, according to the amendments made to Senate 2121, North Dakota will not conduct a presidential preference contest in late February of the year 2000.

However, recognizing the interest and need to be involved in the presidential selection process in the year 2000, Senate Bill 2121 was amended to entitle North Dakota's recognized political parties to conduct presidential preference caucuses in the year 2000. Senate Bill 2121, as amended, establishes a week-long window for North Dakota's political parties to conduct their respective caucuses between the last Tuesday in February and the first Tuesday in March in the year 2000. The weeklong window was created to give North Dakota's political parties a viable opportunity to participate at a meaningful level. The amendments also specify that a political party must caucus on one designated day within that weeklong window.

The amended version of Senate Bill 2121 provides that a presidential caucus must meet the provisions of holding caucuses according to Chapter 16.1-03 with the exception that political parties do not have to hold presidential preference caucuses in each organized precinct. The amended bill also requires presidential caucus results to be used when determining delegate selection to national party conventions, as is the case with the results of the presidential preference contest.

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The benefits and advantages of a North Dakota presidential caucus week according to the amended version of Senate Bill 2121 could be significant.

1. North Dakota's political parties conducting their respective presidential caucuses within a week's time focuses the interest and "hoopla" into a narrow and manageable timeframe.
2. National credibility and attention due to statutory legitimacy.
3. The presidential caucuses would be early enough for attracting the attention of presidential candidates, the public and the media.
4. The presidential caucuses would promote the active participation of all political parties in North Dakota and their followers rather than just one.
5. The presidential caucuses would promote the kind of "old fashioned" grass-roots party building that would likely be very healthy for North Dakota's political parties.
6. The presidential caucuses would provide an opportunity to recruit active newcomers into North Dakota's political parties.
7. The presidential caucuses would provide a viable and fiscally responsible alternative to the presidential preference primary/contest.
8. The presidential caucuses would not interfere with regular county auditor business during the heart of their busiest season.

For these reasons, I encourage your support for the amended version of Senate Bill 2121.